

Good afternoon, my name is Ali Manchester. I work at Community Health Resources Inc as the Parenting Support Services Supervisor. Parenting Support Services or PSS provides support to parents to enhance positive family functioning. PSS incorporates two evidence-based curricula into weekly meetings with parents. Therefore, it takes several weeks for new staff to be trained and accredited as instructors for these curricula. It has been an ongoing struggle to staff this program. In the 2.5 years CHR has held the contract, our program has been fully staffed with all staff members completely trained for only the last 3 months.

It seems CHR is able to attract and train talented individuals; however, we are unable to compete with the current job market. Therefore, we are unable to keep employees in these positions and turnover is rampant. The pattern I have seen in recent years is staff joining CHR, gaining valuable experience and then leaving for better paying jobs with the state. Our grant requires Parent Educators to have at least a Bachelor's degree to qualify for the position. A person without a Bachelor's degree can get an entry level food service job paying \$15/hour. In comparison, a Parent Educator starting with no experience is paid only a few dollars more per hour despite holding a Bachelor's degree. Parent Educators are doing emotionally taxing work, however we are unable to pair that responsibility with an attractive salary so we lose workers frequently.

The families are impacted most by high staff turnover. Parent educators have a caseload of 10 to 12 families who they meet on a weekly basis. When a parent educator resigns, the families who are close to discharge can finish out their program with their original parent educator. However, the families who are only part way through the program or just beginning the intake process must be transferred to a new parent educator. These programs require self-reflection and honesty with oneself on the part of the parent. Parent Educators must forge a bond with families which can take several sessions to develop especially if a family is skeptical on the program from the beginning. We do our best to transition transferred families by doing a hand-off meeting involving the family, original parent educator and new parent educator, but it is more difficult for another staff member to pick up the service once it is already in progress. The original Parent Educator has an already established rapport with the family, so the new Parent Educator must begin that process of rapport building all over. The work we are doing is vital to the community we serve. Please help us maintain the best level of care for the families we support by providing the grants needed to continue services and offer competitive wages for our staff to decrease turnover.